

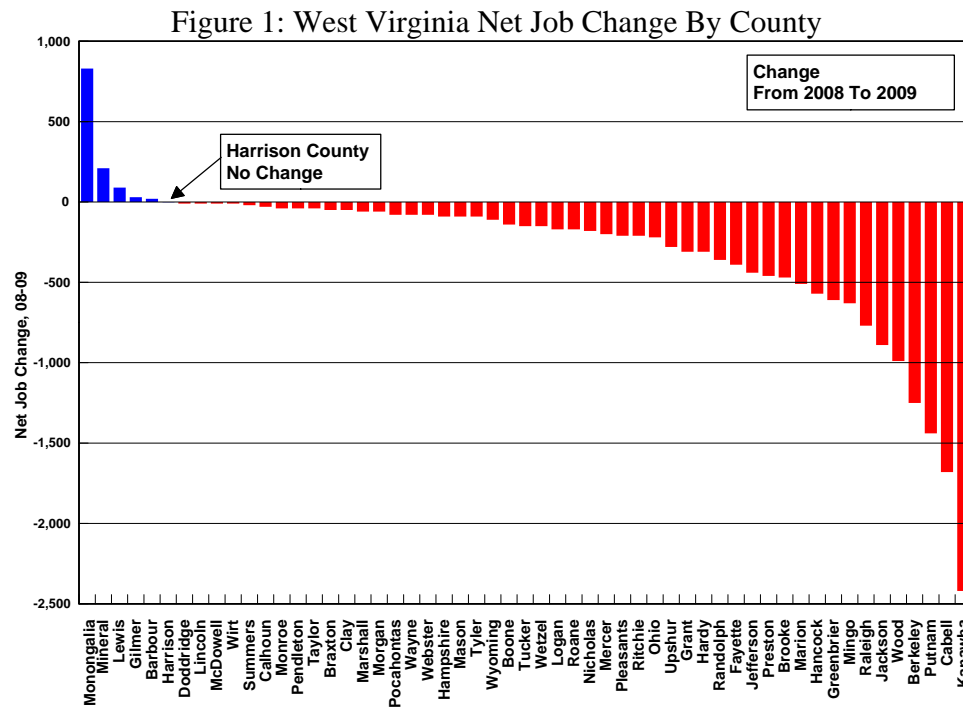


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Harrison County Jobs Stable Last Year, But Unemployment Rose

By George W. Hammond and Peter Shirley

Revised data for 2009 show that Harrison County was one of only six counties to hold steady or add jobs from 2008 to 2009. Harrison County jobs were unchanged from 2008. The only counties in the state to add nonfarm payroll jobs were Monongalia (+830), Mineral (+210), Lewis (+90), Gilmer (+30), and Barbour (+20), as Figure 1 shows. Harrison County's job stability last year was much better than the major job losses suffered by the state and the nation. Indeed, West Virginia jobs declined by 17,900 (-2.3 percent) and the nation experienced a drop of 4.3 percent.



Source data: Workforce WV

While Harrison County jobs were stable last year, it has not emerged unscathed from the downturn that has punished the state and the nation. Indeed, the county's unemployment rate rose from 3.8 percent in 2008 to 6.7 percent in 2009. Even so, the county rate remained well below the state (7.9 percent) and national (9.3 percent) rates.

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In 2009, Harrison County generated the most job growth in health care and government. The county posted smaller gains in leisure and hospitality; other services; financial activities; and construction. Job gains in the government sector reflected growth in the federal and local government sectors, because state government employment in the county was roughly stable. Mining and manufacturing each lost jobs during the past year, reflecting the global downturn. Trade, transportation, and utilities also posted job losses (with declines concentrated in wholesale and retail trade) as did professional and business services. Employment was stable in the information sector.

In addition to job stability in 2009, Harrison County also posted population growth, according to the latest estimates from the Census Bureau. The data suggest that the county added 313 residents during the past year and that the county has added 862 residents since 2007. This reflects the solid job gains during the period in the county and also the continuing investment in residential construction.

According to the latest data from FW Dodge, the value of construction starts in the county rose significantly in the first quarter of 2010, compared to year ago levels. Indeed, the total value of construction contracts hit \$164 million in the first quarter, at an annualized rate. The increase in the first quarter reflects stronger activity across the board, with significant increases in residential, nonresidential, and non-building (infrastructure) projects. This activity should be reflected in additional stability in construction employment during the coming year or even net gains.

Per capita personal income in Harrison County rose by 5.9 percent in 2008, to \$35,140, according to the latest estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. That far outpaced the national rate of inflation (3.8 percent), as well as state (5.0 percent) and national (2.0 percent) growth.

What's For Dinner In Harrison County?

By Amy Higginbotham

Most dinner ideas are centered around some type of meat (i.e. beef, chicken, pork or fish). For Harrison County residents in the first quarter of 2010, the price of dinner meats in comparison to other parts of the state varied from most to least expensive.

As shown in Table 1, the average price per pound for a T-bone steak and a five to six ounce can of tuna in grocery stores in Harrison County was the most expensive of the areas in West Virginia that participated in the survey. In fact, T-bone steaks were on average in Harrison County \$0.83 more expensive per pound than in Morgantown. The average price per pound, however, for sausage was the lowest in the state at \$3.16 per pound. While the price of steaks, tuna, and sausage were at the maximum or minimum for the state, ground beef and chicken prices in the county were closer to the state average.

Table 1
Cost of Living Price Comparison
First Quarter 2010

	T-bone Steak (per lb)	Ground Beef (min 80% lean, per lb)	Sausage (Jimmy Dean, per lb)	Chicken (whole, per lb)	Tuna (Starkist or Chicken of the Sea, 5-6 oz. can)
Harrison County	\$8.65	\$2.04	\$3.16	\$1.04	\$0.94
Charleston	\$8.42	\$1.89	\$3.29	\$0.92	\$0.80
Martinsburg - Berkeley County	\$7.32	\$2.61	\$3.39	\$1.15	\$0.89
Morgantown	\$7.82	\$2.23	\$3.51	\$0.96	\$0.92
Pittsburgh, PA	\$8.39	\$2.53	\$3.81	\$1.54	\$0.85
Washington, DC	\$8.99	\$2.89	\$3.59	\$1.45	\$1.08
New York (Manhattan), NY	\$14.32	\$3.99	\$4.95	\$2.07	\$1.92
U.S. Average	\$8.74	\$2.67	\$3.33	\$1.17	\$0.94
U.S. Minimum	\$4.83	\$1.50	\$2.42	\$0.70	\$0.60
U.S. Maximum	\$14.32	\$3.99	\$4.99	\$2.46	\$2.09

While the cost of meat in Harrison County varied by type, the average cost of living for the area remained below average (Table 2). For the first quarter of 2010, the total cost of living for Harrison County was 4.6 percent below the national average according to the ACCRA Cost of Living Index. The most expensive areas in the country were Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Honolulu, whose total indexes were 63 to 118 percent above the national average. For West Virginia, Morgantown had the highest cost of living at 1.5 percent above the national average while Martinsburg-Berkeley County had the lowest at 10.7 percent below average.

Table 2
ACCRA Cost of Living: First Quarter 2010

	Composite Index (100%)	Grocery Items (13%)	Housing (29%)	Utilities (10%)	Transportation (9%)	Health Care (4%)	Misc. Goods & Services (35%)	Estimated 2009 MSA Population
Metropolitan Area								
West Virginia Urban Areas								
Harrison County*	95.4	93.3	96.1	91.8	104.9	87.8	94.2	92,441
Charleston	92.5	87.2	88.7	95.2	100.8	94.0	94.0	304,214
Martinsburg-Berkeley County	89.3	93.0	92.5	85.5	100.0	99.6	90.0	266,149
Morgantown	101.5	93.2	115.8	89.3	102.6	97.1	95.9	120,327
Other Micropolitan Statistical Areas								
Ashland, OH	88.3	100.2	72.5	90.8	102.3	88.2	91.8	55,044
Dodge City, KS	90.4	90.7	79.9	87.9	94.2	90.2	99.3	33,692
Kodiak, AK	127.9	148.0	127.2	131.8	140.8	131.6	113.9	13,346
Paducah, KY	88.5	97.2	76.3	99.4	90.4	87.8	92.0	98,609
Staunton-Augusta County, VA	95.3	94.0	92.7	102.3	96.5	96.0	95.4	118,147
Tupelo, MS	88.2	91.0	73.7	110.1	92.8	84.2	92.2	134,161
Major U.S. Metro Areas								
Baltimore, MD	119.1	108.9	156.3	115.0	105.5	98.5	98.6	2,690,886
Charlotte, NC	93.5	96.1	79.9	89.7	99.4	111.1	101.6	1,745,524
Dallas, TX	90.8	95.9	71.9	105.4	97.9	103.4	97.1	4,326,384
Denver, CO	102.0	98.8	104.9	106.3	93.6	106.6	102.0	2,552,195
Detroit, MI	102.6	91.7	99.6	132.4	102.9	96.8	100.9	1,925,848
New York (Manhattan), NY	218.0	161.0	338.9	171.0	119.9	132.2	148.6	19,069,796
Orlando, FL	97.4	99.7	86.5	109.0	103.6	92.3	101.1	2,082,421
Pittsburgh, PA	91.5	104.9	72.4	100.5	106.3	90.7	95.1	2,354,957
Richmond, VA	106.0	106.9	102.2	116.2	102.4	115.0	106.0	1,238,187
Seattle, WA	123.3	119.6	145.5	84.2	117.5	118.7	119.6	2,611,012
Washington, DC	137.9	109.5	219.1	98.9	109.2	103.4	103.3	5,476,241

* ACCRA pricing was completed for the Clarksburg Micropolitan Statistical Area which includes all of Harrison County.

Source: ACCRA Cost of Living Index: Comparative Data for 308 Urban Areas Volume 43(1); U.S. Census Bureau

For Harrison County, the composite index was driven below the national average by below average prices for grocery items, housing, utilities, health care, and miscellaneous goods and services. In fact, the average cost for a doctor exam, a trip to the dentist, an eye exam, Advil, and a prescription of Lipitor in Harrison County was 12.2 percent below the national average. Transportation costs were the only goods and services that were above average for the county at 4.9 percent above the national trend.

The ACCRA Cost of Living Index measures the differences in the cost of goods and services for households in the top income quintile for areas across the United States and is managed by the Council for Community and Economic Research.

While the ACCRA Cost of Living Index gives us an indication of the regional cost differences across the United States, we must interpret this with some caution. The ACCRA index measures cost differences of goods and services but excludes taxes and non-consumer expenditures. The index is also tailored to measure the cost of living differences for professional households in the top income quintile for each area and thus may not be applicable to all individuals.

Harrison County Economic Indicators

(Data Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Region/Indicator	Year							
	2007	2008	2009	2009:1	2009:2	2009:3	2009:4	2010:1
Harrison County								
Total Nonfarm Employment*	34,427	34,903	34,913	34,263	35,310	35,063	35,013	34,637
Total Nonfarm Employment (%)	-0.3	1.4	0.0	-9.7	12.8	-2.8	-0.6	-4.2
Nat. Res. and Mining	731	784	758	787	763	767	717	760
Construction	1,654	1,718	1,733	1,540	1,817	1,837	1,737	1,513
Manufacturing	2,211	2,051	1,871	2,007	1,913	1,753	1,810	1,810
Trade, Trans., and Util.	7,683	7,833	7,463	7,470	7,520	7,447	7,413	7,363
Information	670	675	676	673	707	677	647	640
Financial Activities	1,108	1,078	1,090	1,090	1,097	1,090	1,083	1,100
Prof. & Bus. Servs.	2,514	2,543	2,449	2,410	2,417	2,463	2,507	2,433
Educ. & Health Servs	5,015	5,118	5,348	5,160	5,397	5,397	5,437	5,403
Leisure and Hospitality	3,013	2,972	3,063	2,887	3,180	3,180	3,007	2,973
Other Services	2,251	2,281	2,298	2,247	2,320	2,310	2,317	2,323
Total Government	7,579	7,856	8,167	7,997	8,183	8,143	8,343	8,317
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.0	3.8	6.7	6.1	6.5	6.8	7.3	9.0
Residential Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	23	22	14	8	18	19	11	20
Non-Building Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	19	30	16	24	24	3	12	42
Non-Residential Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	204	10	5	2	1	11	5	102
Total Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	246	63	35	34	43	33	28	164
Population	68,049	68,598	68,911	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Per Capita Personal Income (\$)	33,190	35,140	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
West Virginia								
Total Nonfarm Employment (thous.)	758.3	762.0	744.1	742.0	750.2	741.2	743.0	722.3
Total Nonfarm Employment (%)	0.3	0.5	-2.3	-13.5	4.5	-4.7	0.9	-10.7
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.2	4.3	7.9	7.3	8.0	8.1	8.3	10.5
Residential Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	968	512	319	214	339	429	293	254
Non-Building Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	3,000	1,001	2,104	645	2,125	2,580	3,065	893
Non-Residential Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	915	455	494	421	669	449	438	565
Total Const. Contracts (\$ mil. AR)	4,883	1,968	2,917	1,279	3,133	3,459	3,796	1,711
Housing Price Index (1980Q1=100.0)	229.1	231.4	229	232.2	230.5	226.8	225.4	n/a
Housing Price Index (%)	3.0	1.0	-1.2	4.8	-3.0	-6.3	-2.3	n/a
Population	1,811,198	1,814,873	1,819,777	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Per Capita Personal Income (\$)	30,121	31,634	32,219	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
United States								
Total Nonfarm Employment (thous.)	137,598	136,790	130,920	131,348	131,534	130,028	130,769	128,220
Total Nonfarm Employment (%)	1.1	-0.6	-4.3	-13.4	0.6	-4.5	2.3	-7.6
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.6	5.8	9.3	8.8	9.1	9.6	9.5	10.4
Housing Price Index (1980Q1=100.0)	381.3	370.4	355.5	367.0	358.2	349.7	347.2	n/a
Housing Price Index (%)	1.9	-2.9	-4.0	3.2	-9.3	-9.1	-2.9	n/a
Population	301,579,895	304,374,846	307,006,550	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Per Capita Personal Income (\$)	39,392	40,166	39,138	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes:

Construction data is from FW Dodge. Monthly data is reported at annual rate. AR indicates annual rate
 Per Capita Personal Income is from www.bea.gov , Population is based on Census estimates on July 1 of that year
 Employment data is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and WORKFORCE West Virginia
 Housing Price Index is from the Federal Housing Finance Agency. www.fhfa.gov
 Data compiled by WVU Bureau of Business and Economic Research, www.bber.wvu.edu
 *Total nonfarm employment may not equal industry sums

Harrison County Economic Monitor

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